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Use a Formula as a Named Range in Excel

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Regarding the article "The Ultimate Sum Formula in Excel" (www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1759,1401321,00.asp): I have a better way than those complex formulas to sum all cells above a certain point. Define a named range as `=OFFSET (A$1,,,ROW()-1)` and call it A. Do this step while the cursor is in column A. Now define a second range name S as `=SUM(A)`. Enter the simple formula `=S` anywhere on the current sheet and it will calculate the desired sum of all numbers above.

To make this work for any sheet in the workbook, modify the range name A to read `=OFFSET (INDIRECT("R1C"),,,,ROW() -1)`. This formula is slightly longer than the previous one, but it does not require matching the cell address to the current column when creating the formula, and it will work in any sheet of the workbook. Leave the second name unchanged, and the rest of the process is the same.

Shane Devenshire

Although this technique is not a formula as such, it reveals amazing possibilities. Most of us have probably assumed that named ranges can only refer to—well, ranges—rectangular areas of cells on the worksheet. The idea that a named range can be defined by a formula is surprising.

For those less familiar with using named ranges in general, here are more detailed steps. Select Insert | Name | Define from the menu. In the edit box at the top enter A, and in the "Refers to" box at the bottom enter `=OFFSET(INDIRECT ("R1C"),,,,ROW()-1)`, then click on Add. Enter S and `=SUM(A)` in the same way, click on Add again, and click on Close. Now you can sum all the numbers above any cell by entering `=S`. Insert or delete rows at will; the result will always be the sum of all the numbers above the cell.

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